

# <sup>1999</sup> National Evaluation Wastewater Operator of the 104(g)(1) Training Program



produced by the

**Maryland Center for Environmental Training  
of the College of Southern Maryland**

in partnership with the

**104(g)(1) grantees**

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Cover photograph by Jake Bair, Maryland Center for Environmental Training

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Jake Bair, retired Director of the Maryland Center for Environmental Training and former key spokesperson for the 104(g)(1) program, contributed text and photographs for the report.

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# Abstract

This report is intended to present an overview of the 104(g)(1) Wastewater Operator Training Program as it is currently being implemented throughout the country. All 104(g)(1) grantees and EPA regional coordinators were surveyed in April 1999 to collect data on:

- funding
- program staffing
- numbers of facilities assisted
- types of assistance provided
- referral sources
- circumstances for delivery of assistance
- factors limiting performance at plants
- factors limiting the assistance program's success
- reasons for and types of program successes

The survey responses and data from other program resources have been summarized and are presented in the Program Evaluation Report. Case studies are published in this evaluation to present vignettes of the program and the ways it works throughout the country.

The Operator Training Program began in 1982 to provide technical assistance to small wastewater treatment plants that were experiencing difficulties in meeting their discharge permits. Benefits to systems receiving 104(g)(1) assistance include improved compliance, cost savings for communities, enhanced operator professionalism and improved operations, maintenance, and safety.

Annual federal funding for the program has been less than \$2 million per year, plus matching funds from state and local governments and others. In FY99, 988 facilities received 104(g)(1) assistance, with a 93 percent success rate for achieving or maintaining compliance or improving performance. The assistance was provided at an average federal cost of \$1816 per project.

The 104(g)(1) on-site help is provided by technical assistance providers with substantial understanding of the challenges facing small systems. Assistance is comprehensive and often long-term. Approximately 550 small communities throughout the country are currently receiving assistance under the Operator Training Program.

